

Council Workshop
June 2, 2004

Mayor Marse called to order the council workshop of June 2, 2004 at 7 pm.

Members Present: Mayor J.M. Marse, Council members Janice McLean, Earl King, Jean Arrant, Mike Helton, and Scott Brannon were present. Also present: City Clerk Diane Riley, City Attorney Clayton Adkinson, and City Engineer Charles Peters.

Councilman Helton did the invocation and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

Attorney Adkinson addressed the Fire Department issue; paying volunteers for services. This was only for informational purposes. After researching, Adkinson stated it would be okay to do this.

Mayor Marse explained what has happened in negotiations with Dewey Wilson, of Regional Utilities. Mayor had requested 10 acres of property and a well at Rock Hill. Regional Utilities denied him that request. He requested that Regional run the sewer in the Mallard Creek area and up hwy. 331 to Joe Campbell Road. This would allow businesses to connect located on hwy 331. Regional agreed to this request. Mayor also asked for a place on the 31/2 section for a future site of a waste-water treatment plant. It was agreeable. If we needed our sewer treated Regional agreed to treat ours until we were able to upgrade or build a new plant. In return they want to use our plant for treatment until they complete their plant on the 31/2 section. Some of the developments effected are Brandon Oaks on south hwy331 whom is purposing 1100 +- houses, an RV park scheduled for construction on county road 3280, and Bear Creek subdivision is expanding. Regional Utilities will be servicing south hwy 331 from Ramey Branch to the bay. Bay Grove area, Black Creek area, all the area east of hwy 331 to hwy 20. Windswept Estates would be serviced by Regional.

Councilwoman Arrant expressed her opinion that once a company enters into a franchise they can go like wild fire. She is opposed to such a company coming into Freeport's area.

Councilman Brannon stated that the original concern was the environmental effects that the septic tanks were causing to the bay. He feels that with the resent annexations around the Bay Loop area would keep the City busy providing them with sewer services and that the City did not need to stretch to thin, when a private company could provide the services needed. The area addressed by the Mayor was outside of the City limits and should remain a free enterprise area. He opposes at this point for the City to take on this project.

Councilman Helton concurred with Councilman Brannon.

Councilman King expressed the feeling that he does not think the City should go to the Bay Grove area with sewer. That is the county and the county should provide that area with sewer.

City engineer, Charles Peters, stated that on principal he agreed with Councilman Brannon about serving just Freeport, yet the other extreme the City has position itself since 1996 with funds collected in impact fees to pay for growth. To accommodate developers in the Bay Grove area only a nominal amount of \$650,000 would be needed. With the known tap requested on the water side there is over a \$1,000,000 in potential sales. To accommodate the Bay Grove loop you need only a lot another \$150,000. Charles stated that the County offered assistance with funding applications back in 1999 and should assist us if we decide to expand our sewer.

To answer a question proposed by Councilman King, "Where does the City want to be in 1, 5, 10 years", City Attorney Clayton Adkinson responded by informing the Council that the earlier council members demanded franchise areas from the County. The City paid dearly for those areas and just 5 years ago the Council voted to have a 5 mile barrier not allowing other utility companies in the City.

Councilwoman McLean asked if a decision was necessary at this time. She was informed that not today, but it would in the near future. Councilwoman McLean

reported that most people did not want the City to do the expansion in the Bay Grove area.

The audience spoke up and commented that although they do not live within the city limits of Freeport, they felt that Freeport is their community and it is a prime opportunity for Freeport to expand our utility.

Jack Rhodes expressed some concerns that he had as the following: if the City still plans to treat Regional’ influence would there be capacity for his client in six months, and what is the County allowing for density in the unincorporated area of Walton County.

Discussion furthered amongst the Council, Clayton Adkinson, and Charles Peters. It was decided to go to the workshop on the fifteen and hear what explanations are made for allowing Regional Utilities to come in the City’s franchise.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

J.M. Marse, Mayor

Diane Riley, City Clerk

Janice McLean, President of Council